

DALLAS, TEX.  
NEWS

DEC 2 1970

M - 236,267

S - 276,330

CIA 1.04 Powers, Francis Gary  
SOC. 4.01.2 Operation Overflight

# Powers Says Nightmare Didn't End

By MARYLYN SCHWARTZ

U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers said Tuesday the nightmare of two years in a Russian prison didn't end with his release.

"We had just gotten back on American soil. It was in the middle of the night on the eastern shore of Maryland and I turned on a car radio. I couldn't believe my ears. The newscaster was calling me a traitor."

He said it was the beginning of another ordeal.

"No one knew my side of the story. I think the CIA could have done more to present it when all the criticism came, but they just kept me under wraps. I was never given any instructions on what to do if my plane was shot down. As far as giving out information to the enemy, I had been told 'Tell them everything.' They're going to get it out of you anyway."

Powers said he was particularly bitter about a statement released by the national commander of the American Legion, Martin B. McKneally.

"McKneally said I had served my country badly and that I was more mercenary than patriotic. He blasted the fact that I was going to collect back pay for having been in prison. He questioned why I hadn't killed myself. He said because my life was saved, many lives were lost. I don't know of one life lost because of my capture."

Powers said he received only \$20,000 of the \$52,000 owed him in back pay. The rest was taken up by Internal Revenue and spent by his ex-wife.

"And as far as what was left, I wouldn't take on another 21 months in prison to get \$20,000 more."

Powers was in Dallas to promote a book he'd written about his capture, "Operation Overflight."

The pilot said the May 1, 1960 flight in which he was shot down was the first time he had taken along a poison needle.

"We could take them if we wanted. We were told it could also be used as a weapon. I think that's the reason I took it. I considered killing myself with it as I was crashing because I was so terrified of what would happen when I was found."

Powers called his captors "as humane as possible under the circumstances."

"The trial was to be held in Moscow. I said I was guilty and to please just sentence me. But they insisted on a trial. My lawyer was famous for losing every big case he'd ever handled. The prosecutor was famous for winning every big case he'd ever taken on. The odds weren't in my favor. No Americans were allowed."

Powers said he didn't expect to get out of prison alive and was particularly despondent when the second Christmas season had passed.

"That was when they usually told you

you would be released. Finally in February, 1962, they asked me how I would like to go to Moscow without a guard. They made no mention of release, but it sounded hopeful. After Moscow I went to East Berlin. I wasn't given any more information, but I knew I was going in the right direction. Up until the last minute they didn't tell me it was a prisoner exchange, they said it was a humanitarian act on the part of the Russians."

Powers, until recently, had been working as a test pilot for Lockheed in California. He was released from his job in February.

He said he would like to find another job as a pilot but is presently devoting his time to promoting his book.

"I would also like to get involved in the campaigns to get help for the Americans being held as prisoners by the North Vietnamese. I can feel sympathy for their situation which is much worse than anything I had to endure."

With Release